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Plain Talk

**for parents
about your
5 to 6 year old**

Understanding your 5 to 6 year old

*Every child and parent is unique.
This brochure highlights some general
patterns of growth and development that
apply to most children.*

*As you watch, listen to, and play with
your child, you will discover when she or
he is ready for new activities and skills.
You will find your own ways to use old
and new ideas, to fit your individual
personality, your family life, and your
child's needs.*

General Traits

- Enjoys jumping rope, riding toys and throwing balls
- Likes to be helpful
- Enjoys increasingly complicated jigsaw puzzles
- May be able to print first name, the first letter of last name, and write two or three numbers recognizably
- Loves to cut, trace, draw, paste, string beads
- Likes to talk, talk, talk
- Eats very adequately but manners are still far short of adult standards
- Frightening dreams are frequent
- Beginning to play games with rules (such as tag)
- Beginning to understand right and wrong; is interested in the ideas of fairness and justice

What a Parent Can Do

- Encourage activities with an adult such as sports, cooking, shopping.
- Give your child a chance to take on new responsibilities.
 - Break tasks down into small easy-to-follow steps.
 - Accept mistakes and try not to take over the job.
 - Be clear about the things you expect: “Please take out this trash bag now.”
 - Be sympathetic of failure and help your child express disappointment.
 - Encourage pride in successes and pay more attention to them than to mistakes.
- Set firm limits. Indicate disapproval of fighting, hitting and teasing, or using bad language. Children learn by watching their parents, so avoid shouting and name calling.
- Children need help understanding the difference between truth and fantasy, fooling and lying.
- Prepare your child for kindergarten. Visit the school with your child and be positive about school experiences. Accept fearfulness about school as normal. Talk with the teacher often about how your child is doing, likes and dislikes, and school activities.

Toys for the 5 to 6 year old

- Beads and large buttons to string
- Puzzles with 14-16 pieces
- Scissors, paper and paste
- Scraps of material, paper to paste
- Brushes and water colors
- Cars, trucks, small animals and people
- Blocks in various sizes
- Play dough
- Crayons and colored pencils
- Felt tip pens
- Costume box with hats, scarves, jewelry, old clothes
- Lego or other construction toys
- Large bats and balls
- Books, magazines to read, cut and paste
- Simple card and board games (Old Maid, Candy Land)